

On behalf of New York's 21st District, I would like to thank Joseph for his dedication to serving his community, and I congratulate him for reaching this significant milestone.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 40, COMMISSION TO STUDY AND DEVELOP REPARATION PROPOSALS FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS ACT

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 4, 2021

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to announce the reintroduction of H.R. 40, the "Commission to Study and Develop Reparation proposals for African Americans Act," legislation which was cosponsored by 173 Members in the 116th Congress and today is being reintroduced with more than 100 original cosponsors.

This legislation was first introduced in 1989 by the late and beloved Congressman John Conyers of Michigan, the former chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary, and is intended to examine the institution of slavery in the colonies and the United States from 1619 to the present, and, further, to recommend appropriate remedies.

Since the initial introduction of this legislation, proponents have made substantial progress in elevating the discussion of reparatory justice at the national level and joining the mainstream international debate on the issues.

Though some have tried to deflect the importance of these conversations by focusing on individual monetary compensation, the real issue is whether and how this nation can come to grips with the legacy of slavery that still infects current society.

Through legislation, resolutions, news, and litigation, we are moving closer to making more strides in the movement toward reparatory relief.

Today, there are more people at the table—more activists, more scholars, more CEOs, more state and local officials, and more Members of Congress.

However, despite this progress and the election of the first American President of African descent, the legacy of slavery lingers heavily in this nation.

While we have focused on the social effects of slavery and segregation, its continuing economic inequalities and disparities remain largely ignored by mainstream analysis.

These economic issues are the root cause of many critical issues in the African American community today, such as education, healthcare and criminal justice policy, including policing practices.

The call for reparatory justice represents a commitment to entering a constructive dialogue on the role of slavery and racism in shaping present-day conditions in our community and American society.

H.R. 40 is important and needed legislation because it goes beyond exploring the economic implications of slavery and segregation.

It is a holistic bill in the sense that establishes a commission to examine the moral and social implications of slavery.

Madam Speaker, the United States is the world's only superpower and boasts the larg-

est economy in the history of the world and for many years was the world's indispensable nation and the example that all aspiring democracies wished to emulate.

At the same time, this nation has also been home to many searing instances of social unrest resulting from racial injustices, as we are now witnessing on the streets of big cities and small towns in urban and rural communities.

We are seeing Americans, by the millions, across the country, coming from all races and ages, engaging in what the late John Lewis called "good trouble" by protesting and demanding an end to the systemic racial inequality in our criminal justice system that too often victimizes and disproportionately treats black Americans worse, *ceteris paribus*, when it comes to suspicion, apprehension, arrest, detention, trial, sentencing, and incarceration.

While the brutal deaths of George Floyd in Minneapolis and Breonna Taylor in Louisville shocked the conscience of the nation, most black Americans will tell you what they experienced is not new, but has been occurring for generations, if not centuries.

What is critically important to understand is that the instances of brutal and unfair treatment the nation has witnessed this year cannot be attributed to the proverbial few "bad apples in the bushel" but is instead the foreseeable consequence of systemic racism and racial inequality in the system.

Not just the criminal justice system, but the health care system, the economic system, and the educational system to name the most glaring examples.

To find our way out of this dark time, we need to understand how it came to be.

That is the purpose of H.R. 40, which establishes a commission to examine slavery and discrimination in the colonies and the United States from 1619 to the present and recommend appropriate remedies.

Among other requirements, the commission shall identify (1) the role of federal and state governments in supporting the institution of slavery; (2) forms of discrimination in the public and private sectors against freed slaves and their descendants; and (3) lingering negative effects of slavery on living African-Americans and society.

Truth and reconciliation about the Original Sin of American Slavery is necessary to light the way to the beloved community we all seek.

The uncomfortable truth is that the United States owes its position as the most powerful nation in the world to its slave-owning past.

Initially, slavery in America was not instituted for black people.

The colonists in the southern states simply wanted persons to cultivate and hue the soil of the New World's wild untamed lands.

And they wanted to exploit these boundless natural resources as cheaply as possible.

At first, they tried to enslave the indigenous persons they found when they arrived from Old World but that did not work because the native persons they encountered were nomadic rather than agrarian.

So next, landowners turned to poor persons from Europe arriving to work as indentured servants, but this did not work either for several reasons.

First, such persons were not as hardy in working under the difficult conditions that existed.

Also, because as subjects of the British Crown, indentured workers enjoyed legal rights and protections.

Finally, being white themselves, European indentured servants could escape and blend into the general colonial population.

That is why the landowners set their sights on the western coast of Africa and its people.

That experiment in trafficking in persons failed as well and culminated in a bloody Civil War, but not before America profited handsomely from what President Lincoln rightly characterized in his Second Inaugural as "the bondsmen's two-hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil."

Slavery helped make America an industrial nation but at the cost of inflicting physical, economic, social, psychological, and political damage on Black Americans that despite the progress that has been made continues to this day with stark racial disparities in health care, employment, housing, food, education, and indeed nearly every aspect of American life and death.

Madam Speaker, official slavery ended with the Civil War and ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment.

But unofficial slavery was continued with the new institution of sharecrop farming, a criminal justice system that would press convicts into work once done by slaves, and labor policies that dictated income for work done based upon skin color.

And, of course, all of this was reinforced by the systematic disenfranchisement of Black Americans, the "discrete and insular minority" excluded from "those political processes ordinarily to be relied upon to protect" them, to quote Chief Justice Hughes' famous *Carolene Products* Footnote 4.

For these reasons, the history of the United States is intertwined with the history of enslaved Africans in the Americas.

Madam Speaker, there is blood and there are tears, but there is also redemption and reconciliation.

But to get there, we must know the complete truth and lay our history bare.

The Commission created and empowered by H.R. 40 is a necessary first step in that effort.

I encourage all Members to join me in co-sponsoring H.R. 40, the "Commission to Study and Develop Reparation proposals for African Americans Act."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 4, 2021

Mr. HUFFMAN. Madam Speaker, I regret that due to a scheduling conflict on January 3, 2021, I was unable to cast the following vote. Should I have been present, I would have voted YEA on roll call 3.

HONORING THE LIFE OF AMEER K. EDWARD

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 4, 2021

Ms. LEE of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Ameer K.

Edwards, and his many contributions as a health care provider, as a father and grandfather, and as a beloved member of his community.

Ameer was born in Camden, New Jersey on May 4, 1970, where he was the youngest of 4 children born to Cheryl and Malik Chaka.

Shortly after graduating from the University of Pennsylvania School of Law, Ameer's mother Cheryl Amana Burris moved to San Francisco, where she took a job as senior assistant to Willie L. Brown, who was then a California State Legislator and later became Speaker of the California State Assembly during her tenure.

While in San Francisco Ameer attended various local elementary and secondary schools including Grattan Elementary School and Ecole Notre Dame des Victoires.

Ameer moved back to the east coast with his mother who needed to assist with her father who was diagnosed with cancer. He attended schools in New Jersey, Philadelphia and North Carolina, where he graduated from Charles E. Jordan High School.

Ameer attended college at Hampton University, North Carolina A&T State University and later graduated with honors from North Carolina Central University. He continued his education by getting a master's degree from North Carolina State University.

Ameer worked for over 20 years at University of North Carolina Memorial Hospital as a Health Care Unit Coordinator. He was a hard worker who rarely took time off, and who was highly respected by his coworkers. Ameer received numerous awards for his work. As recently as May 2020, he was chosen as the top employee in his position throughout the entire university.

Ameer was the father of three adult children and two grandchildren, all of whom he loved and with whom he spent as much time as possible. He was devoted to his mother and siblings, and there was nothing he would not do for them to make their lives more enjoyable.

Ameer departed this life on early Monday morning of December 28, 2020, after an extended struggle with cancer. His mother was holding his hand when he quietly passed away.

On behalf of California's 13th Congressional District, I recognize Ameer K. Edwards for his contributions to his family and his community, and I extend my sincere condolences to his loved ones.

**WELCOMING CONGRESSWOMAN
NANCY MACE**

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 4, 2021

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, an article today by Caitlyn Byrd titled, "Republican Nancy Mace to be sworn in as South Carolina's newest member of Congress" in The State newspaper of Columbia reports that:

"[Nancy Mace will be] South Carolina's newest member of Congress and the state's only female representative in Washington." (She is one of the 15 Congressional seats flipped in 2020 from Democrat to Republican).

"Mace, 43, joins a record-breaking number of Republican women elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. Mace, a Daniel Island Republican, will be one of 18 freshman GOP women in the 117th Congress.

"Mace's two children, Elli and Miles, were expected to watch their mom become a congresswoman . . ."

As a native of Charleston myself, I am grateful for the success of Congresswoman MACE. I also appreciate my mother, Wray Wilson, who campaigned in Charleston for President Eisenhower in 1952 before there were any elected Republicans in South Carolina, at any level. With the Trump landslide, now there are the largest Republican majorities in the state with more elected Republicans in 140 years.

In conclusion, God Bless our Troops and we will never forget September 11th in the Global War on Terrorism.

**SUPPORTING EARLY-CAREER
RESEARCHERS ACT**

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 4, 2021

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, today I am joined by Ranking Member LUCAS in introducing the Supporting Early-Career Researchers Act.

As access to COVID-19 vaccines continues to grow, so too does our optimism for emerging from this long national crisis. I look forward to the day when this virus is under control and we can begin the process of recovery. While the full scope of the damage is not yet known, there can be no doubt that this virus has touched every segment of our society. As Chair of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, I am deeply concerned about the severe and long-lasting impacts of this pandemic on our nation's research enterprise.

In order to slow the spread of the virus, universities across the country were forced to cancel in person classes and shut down campus operations as they slowly transitioned to remote learning and hybrid approaches. I commend universities for their dedication to doing their part to slow the spread of the virus and for their commitment to ensuring the safety of their students, faculty, and staff. Universities also stepped up to donate personal protective equipment, reconfigure laboratory space and equipment for COVID-19 research and provide for testing and contact tracing.

These actions, while likely life-saving, came at a cost. The full extent of the financial loss incurred by universities is unknowable at this point. In order to stave off catastrophe, many universities instituted hiring freezes and cancelled new faculty hires.

I am deeply worried about the disappearance of STEM job opportunities and the potential long-term consequences for our STEM pipeline and consequently our innovation ecosystem. For established researchers, the COVID-19 crisis has severely limited their access to their laboratory space. But for early career researchers, these disruptions came at a critical juncture in their research career, threatening to derail their career path.

Even in normal times, postdoctoral research positions provide little job security, with most postdocs employed on two-year contracts.

With the academic job market severely contracted, postdocs find themselves in a truly precarious position. Many of them may be forced to abandon their career path altogether in order to support themselves and their families.

I am thrilled that, after months of deliberations, a bipartisan COVID-19 relief package has been enacted. While this package includes funding for universities, it falls far short of meeting the need. We must act now to avoid losing an entire generation of talented scientists and engineers from our research pipeline. These are they very people whom we will need to overcome the next health crisis, to protect our population against the consequences of catastrophic climate change, and to ensure we remain a global leader in science and technology—leadership that is essential to our economic and national security.

The Supporting Early-Career Researchers Act establishes a \$250 million postdoctoral fellowship pilot program at the National Science Foundation. This program would provide authorization for a much-needed bridge to help early career researchers weather this storm and prevent a permanent loss of STEM talent our nation can ill afford. I look forward to moving this bill quickly.

**DECEMBER VETERAN OF THE
MONTH—MITCH REED**

HON. KEVIN HERN

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 4, 2021

Mr. HERN. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the First District of Oklahoma's December Veteran of the Month, Mitch Reed.

He served in an armored personnel carrier in the United States Army, Mitch Reed honorably served our nation. Mitch continues to serve his fellow veterans through his volunteer work with the Military Order of the Purple Heart and the Military History Center in Broken Arrow.

Mitch Reed served in the Vietnam War. He is the recipient of two Purple Hearts among other awards. He continues to serve veterans in our community and advocate for programs to honor them through the Military Order of the Purple Heart. His efforts led to the designation of Broken Arrow as a Purple Heart City and Tulsa County as a Purple Heart County. A designation that shows our community's gratitude to our veterans and those currently serving in our military.

He answered the call to defend freedom across the globe and sacrificed whatever was necessary in the name of that noble cause. It is my honor to recognize Mitch Reed as the 1st Congressional District of Oklahoma's December Veteran of the Month.

**CONGRATULATING RAY HALL ON
HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE**

HON. ADAM SMITH

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 4, 2021

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate Ray